The University of Southern Mississippi  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
Friday, December 6, 2019, 2:00p.m.  
Scianna Hall 1048 (Hattiesburg)  
IVN to North Academic Building 125 (Gulf Park) and  
Stennis Building 1020, Room 118


Absent: Micheal Davis, Bonnie Harbaugh, Whitney Martin

1.0 Organizational Items  
1.1 Call to Order  The meeting was called to order by Susan Hrostowski at 2:12.  
1.2 Roll Call  
1.3 Recognition of Quorum (22)  
1.4 Recognition of ⅔ membership for voting on Bylaws and Resolutions (29)

2.0 Adoption of Agenda  
- Approved unanimously by voice vote.

3.0 Program  
3.1 Dr. Sam Bruton, University Research Council  
- Here to discuss what is to happen to the University Research Council.  
- Overtime, the primary function of this committee became distributing research awards.  
- While this is a valuable function, Dr. Gordon Cannon, VP for Research, wants to expand the functions of this committee to include being a better conduit between his office and faculty. He additionally wants to consult with this committee regarding pending policies.  
- The tentative plan is to change what was the University Research Council into two committees.  
  - A committee to manage the University Research Day (to be held in November)  
  - A committee to serve in more of an advisory capacity to the VP of Research  
    - A tentative title for this committee is Research Advisory Committee.
• Dr. Gordon was unable to attend but would like the senate’s feedback regarding this tentative plan.
  ○ A senator offered a point of clarification that the Council did more than handing out awards. Dr. Bruton agreed; however, he indicated that recently the committee has been fairly inactive.

4.0 Approval of November Minutes
  • Approved unanimously by voice vote.

5.0 Officer Reports
  5.1 President
In November’s cabinet meeting, we heard from Gilbert Mason, CEO of Journal, Inc. in Tupelo, MS. They are launching a program called Come Home to Mississippi, the purpose of which is to entice Mississippi college graduates who have left the state to return. They propose to accomplish this through connecting to these graduates to Monster, which in turn will help them find jobs in Mississippi.

President Bennett and Stacy Mercier discussed what they learned at a conference in Boston for university presidents on fund raising. The president noted that 44% of contributions to universities comes from individuals, 31% from foundations, 15% from corporations, and 10% from other sources. He stressed the importance of building relationships with students and their parents who may one day make sizeable contributions to the university.

Paul Walter described the new compliance training modules. You should have already received the first of these, a Title IX module. The new modules are more relevant and current. We should not be inundated as we have been in the past by these mandates trainings.

In the Council of Academic Excellence, we discussed our purpose as mechanism of communication and coordination of developing policies and procedures that affect all of the bodies represented. We made plans to develop RFP’s for Southern Fund grants early in 2020. We discussed Academic and Graduate Council member composition, which will be one person from each school and each school will be responsible for electing/appointing it representative to each council.

Dr. Pat Sims and Stacy Reischman Fletcher provided us with the recommendation from Council of Chairs on interim evaluations for those faculty who have not yet had their third year review as we transition to the new schedule of annual evaluations. See attached.

The Provost reported that he is working with deans and directors to create parity between tenure track and teaching track professors. He is also looking into the lack of logical rotation of classes offered and hoping that each school will have sequencing guide to ensure that class are offered in a manner that facilitates students’ graduating on time.
The AAUP will be inviting a speaker to address the faculty during the first week of April on issues related to the changes in higher education and the work of faculty in this changing environment. I offered the Senate’s support in promoting the event.

- There was significant discussion regarding the evaluation schedule change and the resulting burden that it places on faculty to work outside of their contract period.
- The president indicated that she will invite Dr. Pat Sims, the chair of the Council of Directors, and the Provost to the next meeting to discuss this topic.

5.2 President-Elect: No report

5.3 Secretary

The faculty senate website has been updated except for committee assignments. The secretary will email all senators a list of committee assignments and asks that any missing information be sent back to her for inclusion.

5.4 Secretary-Elect: No report

6.0 Decision / Action Items

- Mac Alford presented Faculty Senate Resolution #1, 2019-2020 in Memoriam of Jean W. Wooten.
- Approved unanimously by voice vote.

7.0 Standing Committee Reports

7.1 Bylaws: No report

7.2 Elections: No report

7.4 Faculty Handbook: No report

7.5 Academics

On Wednesday, November 13, a few members of the academics committee (myself, Lee Follett, & Damon Franke) and the Provost attended an in-depth presentation given by representatives from textbook provider Cengage. The Provost’s office organized the meeting. For nearly an hour and a half, Cengage introduced their fully online, textbook subscription service Cengage Unlimited. Their team lead us through a demonstrated navigation of the subscription service and its many features. In addition, they shared interesting data as evidence of the success of their subscription service as it related to cutting costs for student textbook purchases. Basically, there are several ways that Cengage can and has solicited this service, ranging from individual subscriptions to university-wide agreements, and even to programs as massive as state university systems. In the end, for a flat rate, (which can be negotiated depending on the institutional partnership), students will have access to every digital product they offer across all disciplines.
The breadth of information offered in that meeting is way too substantive to adequately summarize in this report. There are many moving parts to Cengage Unlimited. Perhaps the Senate could consider, if indeed we are truly committed to reducing textbook costs, offering Cengage a spot on the Senate’s program next semester. They are more than willing to come to us and offer a demonstration/presentation on their products.

Finally, I’ve spoken with Josh Cromwell in the libraries. He has become one of the leading voices on campus in support of open textbook initiatives. According to the University of Minnesota, “open textbooks are textbooks that have been funded, published, and licensed to be freely used, adapted, and distributed.”¹ Josh and I will meet next Tuesday where he will present his ideas and concerns on the exorbitant and rising costs of textbooks, as well as the benefits and limitations of open access. Should the meeting with Josh be as revelatory as the one with Cengage, then perhaps we as a Senate might want to give him time on the Senate floor for a presentation as well.

¹ https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/

7.6 Administrative Evaluations: No report
7.7 Awards: No report
7.8 Finance: No report
7.9 Governance: No report
7.10 Gulf Coast: No report
7.11 University Relations and Communication: No report
7.12 Welfare and Environment: No report

8.0 Outside Committee Reports

- Anna Jo Barrett, President-Elect of Staff Council

I have two announcements:

The first: Dr. Donavan Johnson, President of Staff Council, announced yesterday he accepted an incredible career opportunity to be the dean of students at Baton Rouge Community College. I will be acting as President in his absence after December 20, 2019 until I am officially instated
as President of Staff Council. I will continue to attend Faculty Senate meetings until the council has an election for President-Elect.

The second: The Staff Council has partnered with AOP to collect donations (monetary or donated items) for Eagles Nest Pantry. (Items the pantry has requested can be found at the following link: https://www.usm.edu/social-work/eagles-nest-food-pantry.php )

Please consider donating to this worthy cause that helps the underprivileged community at The University of Southern Mississippi. If anyone would like for me to pick up donated items, please let me know via email: Anna.J.Berry@usm.edu; 601-266-6485

9.0 Reports from Other University Advisory Bodies
10.0 Consent Items
11.0 Unfinished Business
12.0 New Business
13.0 Good of the Order
   • AAUP/AOP holiday social on Friday, December 6th from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at Java Werks
14.0 Announcements
   14.1 Next Senate Meeting February 7, 2020 in SCH 1043
15.0 Adjourn